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Senate

The Senate met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, prepare our hearts for the great things You would do within and among us today. Remind us that right conduct exalts a nation, but sin destroys any people. Give us a desire to do Your will, to fulfill Your purposes, and to honor Your Name.

Today, lead our Senators in the path of Your purposes. Remind them that no problem they face is too big for You and no detail too small for Your attention. Help them to be wise stewards of Your resources, as they seek to remain mindful of Your presence and receptive to Your power. Give them the same respect and tolerance for the ideas and beliefs of others as they would wish for themselves.

We pray in the Name of our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable SHELDON WHITEHOUSE led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 13, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are going to go immediately to the Defense authorization bill. The debate will be on the Dorgan amendment. Senators DORGAN and SUNUNU will each get 10 minutes to speak this morning. We will vote, I would announce to everyone, as soon as they finish.

There are a number of people who are concerned about the schedule today. If we start to vote early, we will extend the vote for whatever time is appropriate to make sure people have the opportunity to vote. As I indicated earlier this week, the next weeks' work period will be very busy. We should have some late nights and hopefully no weekends, but that is even possible. There will be no votes on Monday.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

LEVIN-REED AMENDMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the Senate has now had a full day to debate the Levin amendment. The questions I raised about it yesterday remain unanswered. Americans need to

know what they are being asked to consider. The troops fighting al-Qaida in Iraq also need to know. I will ask my questions again.

The Levin amendment says the Secretary of Defense shall "commence the reduction of the number of United States forces in Iraq not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this act." What would this reduction involve? The Levin amendment calls for U.S. forces in Iraq to have a limited presence after the reduction. What is a "limited presence"? The Levin amendment says our Armed Forces should only be used to protect U.S. personnel, to train Iraqis to fight, and to engage in "targeted counterterrorism operations against al-Qaida." What does "targeted" mean? The Levin amendment says the Secretary of Defense shall complete the transition of U.S. forces in Iraq to a limited presence and missions by April 30. How does the author define "complete"?

A number of papers across America reported this morning that yesterday's House vote means that most U.S. troops will be out of Iraq by April. I ask the authors of the Levin amendment, is this true?

This 1½-page amendment is the centerpiece of the Democratic leadership's strategy for Iraq. They want us to choose this over the Petraeus plan. Listen to General Petraeus. Just before we began this debate, he made a simple request. He said:

I can think of few commanders in history who wouldn't have wanted more troops, more time, or more unity among their partners. However, if I could only have one thing at this point in Iraq, it would be more time.

Our Democratic-led Senate voted 81 to nothing to send General Petraeus into Iraq. A bipartisan majority of 80 Senators told him in May that he had until September to report back on progress. His strategy has led to what even skeptics describe as an encouraging turnaround against al-Qaida in Anbar, a province which accounts for

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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